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ABSTRACT

An ethnographic study was made of a student-led speech event in an ethnically mixed combined first- and second-grade classroom. In an activity called "Sharing Time," general rules governed appropriate ways of behaving, but no teacher rules governed ways of speaking, topic, or amount of time at talk. Collected over a 5-month period, data were gathered through audiotape recordings supplemented by field notes and interviews. Efforts focused on obtaining an emic, or "insider's view," of success in sharing. It was found that the content of turns in the sharing activity could be described as being object-oriented, event-centered, animal-related, character-oriented (from television or movies), or person-oriented. Two distinct styles of sharing were detected: the performed narrative and the lecture demonstration. Both the typical content of each style and the techniques students used to support their presentations differed. It was additionally found that children developed new sharing styles but could not give reasons for their nominations of best sharers. Best sharers appeared to give more attention to the immediate reactions of their audience. Documented registers of language included humor, seriousness, persuasiveness, or authoritativeness. (Examples of the two typical sharing styles are discussed, and associated sociolinguistic features are pointed out.) (RH)

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SHARING TIME: A STUDENT-RUN SPEECH EVENT [1]

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[1] This paper is a revised version of earlier papers presented at the Ethnography in Education Research Forum on March 21, 1982 and the National Association for the Education of Young Children on November 14, 1982

One of the striking characteristics about elementary school classrooms is the amount of talk that goes on within them. This classroom talk, however, in unequally divided among the classroom participants. In fact, Barnes and Flanders have shown that teachers talk twice as often as students. This two-to-one ratio exists because teachers not only question students, but teachers evaluate their students' responses as well. Childrens' classroom contributions, on the other hand, are often limited to filling in the teacher created slots.

This imbalance in classroom talk is pedagogically paradoxical. Indeed, Piaget's theory argues for learning by doing and nowhere is this Piagetian principle more prescribed than in the case of language learning since by its very nature such learning requires opportunities for practice. By language learning, I mean not merely linguistic competence but communicative competence--structuring discourse for socially meaningful acts such as narrating a story, teaching, directing others and asking questions.

In elementary classrooms, Sharing Time (also called Show and Tell in some classrooms) is one of the few activities in which children can talk for extended periods. Previous studies of Sharing Time have focussed on a teacher led model. (Michaels, Lazarus, New) In this model, through the collaborative effort of teacher and child the former asking guiding

questions, the latter providing additional details, the child succeeds in presenting a complete descriptive or narrative account. The teacher's questions are often designed to help the child with the lexicalization of nouns or with the spatial or temporal ordering of details. In her study of Sharing Time, Michaels has noted that while not explicitly instructional, Sharing Time is an activity in which children guided by their teacher can practice using oral literate strategies.

In Sharing Time as in other activities the teacher retains her evaluative rights. Because of these rights, one of several factors in the assymetrical relationship between teachers and students, Sharing Time turns come to be heard from the teacher's perspective. Success thus becomes narrowly defined.

In the Michaels study previously mentioned, Michaels found that chilren in the same classroom who came from disimilar speech communities received differential practice during the Sharing Time activity. Michaels suggested that chilren used their preferred community speech patterns and noted that Black children whose discourse styles were at variance with those of the teacher received less practice than white children whose discourse styles more closely matched those of the teacher. This mismatch frequently leads to misunderstanding but what is worse to a misassessment of

student abilities.

As part of a research project entitled Oral Preparation for Literacy funded by the Spencer Foundation and directed by Courtney Cazden and Sarah Michaels, I collected the data which is used in this paper. The data, collected over a five month period, includes audiotapes, supplemented by ethnographic field notes and ethnographic interviews with the children as well as the teacher. In this 1-2 grade ethnically mixed classroom where children participate in Sharing Time without the teacher as a participant, I noticed almost immediately that this student run speech event could yield informative data about children's language in a context that was significantly marked by the teacher's absence. This has enabled me to document a classroom activity in which one of the primary sociolinguistic constraints upon children's speech, the presence of an adult is absent.

In this classroom Sharing Time occurs daily immediately following lunch and a brief recess period. At this time the children are called to the activity by the teacher who announces.

Mrs. James: O.K. Jeannie's the group leader

The participants in the speech event are twenty primary grade students ages six to eight; fourteen are second graders

and six are first graders. Of the fourteen second graders, only two were first graders in this classroom this year.

The event takes place in a rectangular shaped group meeting area. The area is bordered on two sides by the classroom walls and enclosed on the other two sides by bookcases. The children sit on the floor and because of the arrangement described above are partially obscured from view and thereby afforded some privacy. This group meeting area is also used by the teacher and students for other large group activities.

A child leader sits on a chair which is placed in the entrance to the area and handles the allocation of turns by choosing from among those children who bid for nomination by raising their hands. In addition to handling turn selection, the child leader is responsible for monitoring individual behavior and maintaining group order. Some leaders accomplish these tasks more easily than other leaders.

There are clearly defined rules that all of the children know. In fact, all of the children who were interviewed could without hesitation state the Sharing Time rules and explain how they operated. When asked how they knew that what they had just cited were the rules, the children were quick to point out that they knew the rules because Mr. James, the teacher told them.

Simply knowing the rules, however, does not prevent some children from attempting--sometimes successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully--to wrest control from the group leader. Consider the following examples. In both cases, Jeannie tries to take over. In the first case, the teacher steps in; in the second case, the leader is able to maintain control.

Jeannie:	Mark, Matt talked two times He talked two times when you weren't. Three, he talked three times.
Mrs. James:	Who's the group leader?
Jeannie:	Mark
Mrs. James:	Then Mark will tell Matt when it's time for him to get a first warning or go back to his seat.

Paul:	All right, Jeannie Jeannie:ee
Jeannie:	I don't got
Paul:	All right, Jackie
Jeannie:	I do:oo
Paul:	You weren't raising your hand before

Jeannie: Cuz remember before I said
I had a turn to go first
You went on to another person
when they didn't have sharing
and they said they didn't

Paul: Jackie

Occasionally before turning Sharing Time over to the leader, the teacher will review the rules. These include that only one person can share at a time, that the leader gets to choose the person who will share, that children have to raise their hands if they want to talk, that children who misbehave will get a first warning and that if children misbehave a second time they get a second warning and go back to their seats. The teacher reviewed the rules infrequently, but I noted that these reviews coincided with the presence of a weak group leader. The teacher's purpose in these interactions seems not primarily to test the children's knowledge of the rules as to indirectly reestablish the authority of the group leader.

Although everyone agrees on the rules. all infractions which violate the "first and second warning" rule are not clearly spelled cut and the child leaders interpret violations of this rule differently. For example, with some leaders lying down on the floor was treated as an infraction while with others lying down on the floor was acceptable behavior. Nonetheless, the first warning allowed children to figure out

which violations were in effect each day before being sent back to their seats. In spite of this ambiguity and the young age of the children, the turn taking, sanctioning and isolation from the group worked smoothly. The children acceded to the child leader's decision and only once, during my first visit which was early in the fall, did I witness a disagreement over the invocation of the "warning rule," and the teacher who is always within earshot stepped in to help negotiate the problem.

The important point here is that while there are clearly defined rules about appropriate ways of behaving which are probably necessary for the speech event to proceed in an orderly fashion, there are no teacher rules governing ways of speaking, topic or amount of time that each person can talk.

In this classroom two distinct but equally successful styles of sharing have emerged. While all of the children lean toward either of these styles of sharing, it is by examining the cumulative performances of three children that the features of each style can be characterized. For purposes of discussion, I will call these styles the performed narrative and the lecture demonstration. Before describing these styles in detail, I will discuss the indicators that I used to measure success.

I was interested in what anthropologists refer to as an emic view (an insider's view) of success; that is, I was interested in the children's idea of what counted as "good" sharing. As a result, I observed and documented the children's behavior during Sharing Time in order to define success from their perspective. I looked for outward signs that children were paying attention, focusing on what Erickson has called "participant structures", non-verbal cues such as eye gaze and postural shifts and listernership behavior such as back channelling, nodding, laughing and commenting.

I realized that outward appearances can be deceiving so after choosing children whom my criteria designated as successful sharers, I interviewed many of the children in the class individually asking the following question, "Who do you think are the best sharers in your class?" As it turned out the children's choices agreed with the children I had selected, so I felt that my indicators were adequate measures of this emic view of success. In this classroom, it is not unusual for good sharers to hold the floor for three to four minutes. The longest single narrative produced to date has been eight minutes long

The content of Sharing Time turns can be divided into five topics: Object oriented, event centered, animal related character oriented (from television or the movies) and person

oriented. Content or topic is a major difference between the lecture demonstration and the performed narrative styles. The subject matter of the lecture demonstration style always consists of the presentation of factual information--the Berlaks' notion of "public knowledge". The subject matter of the performed narrative, on the other hand, is always person oriented emphasizing the interaction between two or more people--the Berlaks' notion of "private knowledge". In each of the styles the techniques that the children used to support their presentations differed. Children using the lecture demonstration style relied on external supports--objects to bolster their presentations. In the following lecture demonstration example Paul, a second grader, uses some rocks.

Paul: This is what I found
This is called um salt rocks
They're um they're kinda rocks
kinda rocks that are white and
they have salt in em
They're a lot in here cuz
I picked em up
O.K. They're going around

Paul passes the rocks to the child sitting next to him; the children pass the rocks around the circle. Immediately following Paul's talk about the rocks there is a series of questions and comments from the children. By elaborating on each of the questions and comments, Paul is able to hold the

floor. As the children examine the rocks that are being passed around they comment to each other about them. At this point a child raises his hand and is recognized by the child leader. He begins:

Child: Yesterday me and Nancy went ice skating

All of the children ignore this remark. Paul still has the floor and they are still interested in what he has to say. In fact, another immediately queries Paul about the rocks. There are several rounds of questions or comments followed by Paul's elaboration. At one point Paul who continues in this teaching mode, stops to chastise a child for putting the rocks in her mouth. Finally there is a lull in the verbal exchanges and the child leader asks if Paul has finished.

Matt: (child leader) All finished?

Paul: Oh no, yea yeah but people can ask me questions.

Only one child asks a question. Paul responds. But twice more Paul solicits questions.

Paul: Anybody else have questions?

Anybody else have questions?

His request yields two additional questions and a comment. Another child raises her hand but before the group leader can recognize her, Paul anticipates still another question.

Paul: What's the question um Jackie?

Paul is mistaken. The child doesn't want to ask a question; she only wants to share. Finally the child leader closes out Paul's turn telling everyone that "it's over guys, it's over."

Paul's performance depends on audience questions and comments upon which he can elaborate thereby holding the floor. His initial lecture before questions, comments and elaboration lasted 20.3 seconds; however, his entire turn lasted 7 minutes 39.2 seconds. Paul expects children to ask questions. In fact, he asks for questions and incorrectly assumes that one child who wishes to share wants to ask a question. The children in this class see Paul's style, and others like it, as instructional. During an interview a child told me that Paul "tells about things that you can learn from. He told one thing in Sharing but it was hard to understand. All I know is that you can learn from it."

Rene, also a second grader, frequently uses the performed narrative in her sharing turns. This style is characterized by the use of features which liken it to a stage performance. Dialogue, gestures sound effects, asides to the audience, call and response and the use of the conversational historical present (shifting from the past to the present tense to highlight certain activities) all accompany this style. In the appendix there is a complete transcription of one of Rene's

sharing time turns. I have broken the narrative into four sections in order to make discussion easier; those sections that are marked with asterisks and whose first and last line are underlined appear in the body of this text.

The entire narrative lasted 6 minutes and 23 seconds and during this time Rene holds the floor and is uninterrupted. Rene begins with the orientation to the narrative. In the orientation, she gives information about time, place, people on the scene, and activity. It is Thanksgiving; Rene and her father are at her "grandma" and "grandpa's" house eating dinner. Actually, her narrative was told on November 17th almost one full week before Thanksgiving. It could have been that Rene was speaking of a previous Thanksgiving or that the word Thanksgiving was used as a time referent for all the times that I visit my grandparents, Thanksgiving included.

I say this for two reasons. The first is that children in this classroom have considerable difficulty expressing all but the most general temporal concepts. Temporal grounding such as "yesterday" and the "day before yesterday", "last year" and "when I was_____" are often used but more specific times are rarely used. "Yesterday" and "the day before yesterday" are used for events that happened in the not too distant past and "last year" and "when I was_____" are used to signal events which occured some time ago. The second

reason is that Rene lives with her mother and makes monthly visits to her father and paternal grandparents' home, so as I mentioned before this word "Thanksgiving" may be a marker of one or more of these visits or it may be used to establish the importance of the event to be told.

In Rene's narrative there is a weaving in of truth with make-believe. The truth is the retelling of the dinner.

Rene: Um at Thanksgiving when I went to my grandma and grandpa um we were we had we had all all this food and I was at the table right and I and I was saying and I said and I ss.. it was the day before Thanksgiving and I said to my I was really really stuffed because we were um cuz we just had finished eating and I said I'm so so full I could eat a Thanksgiving turkey and she said well you eat the stuffing too and I said why don't you and daddy put the stuffing in in bed and my father looked at me and he said huh huh that's what that's what he always does when un I say something like he should be chicken or something he goes ah uh uh huh (laughter) he goes like that

Once Rene begins the narrative action she backs up as if she realizes that additional orientation is needed in order for the children to make sense of the narrative clauses that follow.

Throughout this narrative Rene switches back and forth between orientation and narrative action. These quick shifts are difficult for some children to follow and later I will give an example of a child who questions Rene when she perceives an inconsistancy in the story which is actually one of these shifts. At the end of the first section of the narrative Rene relates her grandfather's observation about her father's outlandish childhood behavior and gives her grandfather's example of this behavior, not her own. A listener could infer from this string of related incidents a point of view about Rene's father established through her grandfather's eyes. While a transcript allows one to make these inferences this string of humorous ancedotes seems to be a cue to the children to laugh. Rene laughs after each one but when the children respond with a snicker instead of a laugh it serves as a kind of signal for Rene immediately jumps into the second phase of her narrative. In this section she introduces animals, a racoon family and a pair of rabbits.

Rene: I heard a scratch again and I went to the same room and it was just a little little baby rabbit with his mo.... with one mother and he was so cute and and they were going and they were.....and um I let em in I fed them some milk and some left over

turkey and um then I and um
then I let them out a minute
later I heard another knocking
Oh at the door I opened it up
and it was grandfather saying
what's all that noise out
there oh ha ha and and um after
that day I never let anything
a living thing in except up
except um uh I forget ANIMALS
except one thing BEARS

She establishes cohesion between the first and second parts of the narrative by providing the temporal connection "and when we were sleeping" and by maintaining the Thanksgiving theme - feeding make-believe visiting animals real turkey. By the time there is a third knock on the door, the children in the audience are making anticipatory noises. When Rene introduces her grandfather instead of an animal and begins the coda, "I never let another living thing in", then starts to stammer, it is a child in the audience who suggests continuation of the animal theme by naming the general word - animals and as Rene continues to stammer the specific word bears. Immediately after this Rene launches into the third part of the narrative again providing orientation to the new scene.

Rene: I was really scared I even
spilled the water that I
was suppose to um be water-
ing the garden of my grand-
father I was screaming and
um I went in um my father

said Rene what's the matter
I said look up there sure
ain't Superman uh huh (laughter)
and he said sure ain't
Superman and I said that's
what I just said sure ain't
Superman and he said
I know it is not it's a vulture
I mean
A HAWK
HAWK
and um and he said oh my God
we'd better we better close
the window cuz we had all the
windows open cuz it was pretty
cold

Rene fails to use cohesive devices to tie this section of the narrative to the previous section and it is unclear how she got from inside of the house to outdoors watering her grandfather's garden or even when the event took place, which if established, might have cleared up the first dilemma. By now, the audience is listening intently and Rene uses the expressive, stylistic device "Sure ain't Superman", not once, but four times. It is at this point that one child mistakes the shift between orientation and narrative action for improper casual connection.

When Rene says "My father said we'd better close the windows cuz we had the windows open cuz it was cold", a child hears that the windows were open because it was cold, instead of what Rene intended, which was that the windows were open was what caused my father to say "Let's close the windows",

because it was cold. Of course, one could argue that it was the use of the present tense that caused the confusion and had Rene said my father said we'd better close the windows cuz we had the windows open cuz it's cold in here, the meaning would have been clearer. When Rene is pressed on this point, she provides two additional reasons. The first is the reason why the windows were open in the first place, "because we were cooling the turkey." The second is the reason why her father said "let's close the windows", because not only was it cold, but because the hawk might fly in.

Rene's explanations do not clarify matters substantially but in the personal narrative clarifications, explanations and definitions are found within one's personal frame of reference, not by reference to the world outside. The point here is while these children tolerate the introduction of fiction or embellished facts, if they advance the story line, they are a critical audience who expect that what they hear will make sense.

In the last part of her narrative, Rene establishes the cohesion between parts three and four of the narrative by using the temporal connection "And the next day" and by carrying over the theme of the hawk. When she is finally interruped by a question, she is about to return to the first

part of the narrative, the Thanksgiving scene, with "And we had pumpkin pie for dessert." What follows Rene's narrative is a two and a half minute discussion lead entirely by the children about hawks. In this discussion several children contribute what they know about hawks.

Sal:	I want her (Rene) to tell me something
Rene:	What?
Sal:	Um, do you know how big a hawk is? How big?
Rene:	There's different sizes but the one we saw is as big as this it was that big (makes motion with hands)
Sal:	My dad said um a grown up um what did you say, hawk
Rene:	Yeah
Sal:	Grownup hawk could from from from wingtip to wingtip they could grow about ten feet
Child:	What's ten feet?
Child:	No, bigger than that
Child:	Bigger than my mom
Mrs. James: (who is standing off to the side)	I'm about five feet
Rene:	Yi, yi, yi
Sal:	Two times as big as my mom.

The discussion continues and children offer examples of abilities that hawks possess, and animals that they prey on.

The two turns that I have discussed in this paper were produced on the same day, but the "anything goes" policy coupled with the children's natural competitiveness is acted out in Sharing Time through the development of new sharing styles and genres. Two such examples follow. In December, a child introduced what later became known as the "dream sequence". Each day this child told one chapter of the dream theme closing with a "to-be-continued" ending. The child introduced new characters daily and the characters were children from the class. Children looked forward to these sequences and always held a slot open for them. I have also noted what I call "topping"; that is, embellishing upon a previous speaker's story. In one such "topping" instance, a child told a story of visiting relatives (cousins) and playing on a water bed. Another child, an arch enemy and best friend of the previous speaker, immediately followed with a story about a relative, an uncle, who happened to live in the New York Greyhound Bus Station. However, when he did visit his niece in Boston, he stayed at the YMCA where he had a water bed filled with goldfish and a water pillow filled with goldfish. Of course, like her friend, this child visited her

unlce at the YMCA but after playing on the goldfish filled water bed and pillow, she fell asleep where she dreamt about swimming underwater in an ocean filled with fish.

When interviewed the children consistently chose Paul, Rene and two other children in the class as the best sharers. Nevertheless, the children were unable to explain why they made their choices or to provide reasons to support their choices. Frequently, the children responded with a tautology; Paul, Rene and the other children were the best sharers in the class because they told the best stories. Whether my failure to elicit the children's reasons was due to flaws in the questionnaire, the inability of the children to put their reasons into words or to the fact that they had no reasons is unclear at this time although I suspect that my failure to elicit their reasons is a combination of the first two factors and not a function of the last.

Michaels and New, both of whom have studied a teacher directed Sharing Time model, have found that teachers show a "literate bias" when they evaluate children's Sharing Time talk. In her study of a Berkeley first grade classroom, Michaels uses a dichotomy--topic centered vs topic associating--to explain this literate bias, while New, in her study of a Cambridge first grade class discusses the teacher's preference for stories that have a beginning, middle and end.

What does appear to differentiate the best from the rest of the sharers is their attention to audience. Throughout the Sharing Time episodes the audience reacts and signals excitement, interest, confusion, impatience and boredom. The successful sharers pay close attention to and capitalize on the immediate reactions of their audience. It is this awareness of audience, best described as a knowledge and understanding of the audience, that the successful sharers use to select an appropriate register or way of talking. Once a register is selected, the successful sharers continually monitor audience cues and feedback to assure that this register is what the audience prefers and understands.

Some of the registers of language that I have documented have been humourous, serious, persuasive or authoritative. The selection of any of these registers can be partially influenced by subject. In some instances, intentions of the speaker will influence a child's register choice and children may initially select a register that reflects the manner in which they wish to be perceived as talking. While subject matter and speaker's intention may influence a child's choice of register, ultimately, register is negotiated between speaker and audience and when the register is not appreciated or understood by the audience, the successful sharers change registers to meet the demands of the audience.

Michaels describes Sharing Time as a kind of "oral preparation for literacy" and suggests that through this activity teachers help children to develop literate discourse strategies that are required in written communication. It must be noted, however, that the development of a literate style required in written communication consists of more than mastering a set of discourse strategies concerned with topic development. Effective writing must also be concerned with other equally complex conventions related to genre, cohesion and register. A writer must attend to all of these elements for no single element will insure good writing. There are professionals whose writing fails miserably not because they have inadequate topic development nor because they have failed to establish cohesion within the text but because they have written in a register inappropriate to the audience they had hoped to reach.

So much attention has been directed toward explaining the differences between written and spoken language that it is impossible for some to consider any similarities between the two forms. Like spoken language, written language has a sociolinguistic dimension and writers like speakers must be aware of and know how to speak to their audience. Knowing how to speak or write to different audiences for a variety of purposes--controlling several registers--can only

enhance one's speaking and writing ability for there are at least as many kinds of registers as there are kinds of audiences but one can only practice different registers and judge their effectiveness if one has many, different, sympathetic audiences.

It is unfortunate that in many classrooms, children rarely practice any register of language other than school language. Furthermore, children customarily use language only to demonstrate learning; seldom do they use language to learn, to entertain, or to interest others. This is because a child's audience is ordinarily his teacher and most what a child is allowed and expected to say is seen as an implicit test.

What is important about this classroom speech event is that it allows children to demonstrate a competence and sophistication that they bring with them from home. The teacher's stated goals for this activity are limited to giving the children an opportunity to talk to each other, leading a group of peers and learning to ask and answer questions. It seems that these goals are more than being met. The children are a critical audience who, while tolerating multiple modes of discourse, expect sharing time turns to be worth listening to. Even children who never share have definite ideas about what counts as good sharing. Children

will without reluctance tell a sharer "That's boring". And these children, who have no teacher to hold the floor open for them, try various strategies, including style shifts to hold the audience's attention.

In the activity described in this paper, where implicit notions about correctness are absent and with an audience that is interested, children are free to explore ideas by reliving a past world, describing a present world, creating a new world, or combining several worlds to amuse, entertain or inform. And it is these conditions that are the best "oral preparation for literacy".

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APPENDIX

** Um at Thanksgiving when I went to
my grandma and grandpa um we were
we had we had all all this food
and I was at the table right
and I and I was saying and I said and I ss..
It was the day before Thanksgiving and I
said to my I was really really stuffed
because we were um cuz we just had finished
eating and I said I'm so so full I could
eat a Thanksgiving turkey and she said well
you could eat the stuffing too and I said
why don't you and daddy put the stuffing in in
bed and my father looked at me and he said huh
huh that's what that's what he always does when
um I say something like he should be chicken
or something he goes ah uh uh huh (laughter)
he goes like that ** and um my grandfather
always makes um jokes about him being so
dumb when he was little like he said one time
he said um he said he's at the kitchen table
he said when your father was about ten he
didn't know his feet from his head and he would
put his shoes on his head and his feet
on top uh huh (laughter) and um Daddy went
huh well you're bald Dad uh huh (laughter)
and um then he goes well guess what you didn't
have any hair when you were five an... and he
said and he said now I bet that was a joke and
he said no I don't have eight (inaudible) I only have
eight plus seven and everyone laughed

and um we heard a scratch
um when we were um sleeping
I heard a scratching noise and I snuck out to the
um door and there was a um a mama
racoon scratching at the thing with um five babies
and um I um called n...nana my grandmother and my
grandfather and my daddy to come and they
me and they we they we let em in for a minute because
um they were kind of allergic to them they only let
them in for a minute and we gave them some milk and stuff
and we gave them some milk and a little bit of of left
over turkey and um we let em out then uh in midnight
ac... actually it was like two o'clock in the morning
and ** I heard a scratch again and I went to the same
room and it was just a little little baby rabbit
with his mo...with one mother and he was so cute
and and they were going and they were
and um I let em in I fed them some milk and some
left over turkey and um then I and um then I let
them out a minute later I heard another knocking
OH
at the door I opened it up and it was my grandfather
saying what's all that noise out there oh ha ha
and and um after that day I never let anything a living
thing in

except um except um uh I forget
ANIMALS
except one thing
BEARS **
I almost got I almost got really scared
because it of it there's three um hawks
near their house that live there and they
try to swoop around and get all the birds
cuz they put out bird feeders and stuff
they um grandma and grandpa they look
down on the bird feeders and they try
to catch all their birds and the hawk was
flying around I could see it I walked out and
I saw this big flying shadow outside no
it couldn't be Superman it just couldn't be
I looked up and I went ah for real I was
terrified cuz I thought he was gonna like come
down and tear me apart or something and I
was screaming I screamed and I ran back up
EY YEAH YEAH
** I was really scared I even spilled the water
that I was supposed to um be watering the
garden of my grandfather I was screaming
and um I went in um my father said Renee
what's the matter I said look up there sure
ain't Superman uh huh (laughter) and he
said sure ain't Superman and I said
that's what I just said sure ain't Superman
and he said (inaudible) I know it is not
it's a vulture I mean
A HAWK
HAWK
and um and he said oh my God we'd better
we better close the window cuz we had all
the windows open cuz it was pretty cold **

and the next day I went out and
I rode my bike right before um I opened the door and I
stuck my head out to make sure there was no hawk
and there weren't and then um I was ridin' my bike
up and down up and down and all of a sudden I heard
this ah ah ah ah aha (noises)
I wonder if Renee's home (noises) and it was Sean
and I went I went ah I nope it's not him again and instead
I then um over came Sean by me a five year old and a sev..
six year old and un they were both going (noises)
wah wah they were making all these weird noises and I
started saying phew I'm glad it's you and they said
we wanted to warn you about the hawk going by and I
said oh my God and I took my bike into the garage and
I said goodbye and I went inside again and that night I
was scared half to death I couldn't go to sleep and I
kept remembering my in my mind I kept um think I
heard a ark ark (noises) and I kept listening
going (hand to ear turning head from side to side)
I even stopped breathing for a moment I went (holds breath)
and I thought I heard a I thought I heard something I
thought I heard someone going ark ark (noises)
but I didn't I was just hearing things cuz I was so
scared

And we had some pumpkin pie for dessert

NOTE: Words in capital letters are comments from the audience